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butterfly, in order to account for Arachne's defeat and the consequent enmity of spiders toward flies.

6. In imitation (by contrast) of the Arachne episode, with the probability of a suggestion from the Cupid and Psyche legend, Spenser invented the Astery metamorphosis to explain the origin of the butterfly.

7. Structurally the most skilful thing in *Muiopotmos* is the linking of the Astery and Arachne metamorphoses to account for the hatred Aragnoll bears Clarion and the resulting death of Clarion in Aragnoll's web.

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### A NEW LIFE OF BYRON

*Byron.* By ETHEL COLBURN MAYNE. In two volumes with eighteen illustrations. New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1912.

"It is no part of my present office," said Swinburne in the preface to his volume of selections from Byron, "to rewrite the history of a life in which every date and event that could be given would now seem trite and stale to all possible readers. If, after so many promises and hints, something at once new and true shall at length be unearthed or extricated, which may affect for the better or the worse our judgment of the man, it will be possible and necessary to rewrite it." The time for this rewriting has, perhaps, arrived. With the exception of Nichol's brilliant sketch, and in spite of many attempts, English and foreign, there has never been a satisfactory life of Byron. Moore's is a notorious failure; Elze's conscientious and heavy; Jeaffreson's hard, prejudiced, and superficial. Moreover Byron is beginning to assume the place which a final and impartial estimate will accord him in literature. The reaction from the prejudiced and ungenerous depreciation of Carlyle, Macaulay, Taylor, and Thackeray, typical of the attitude of early Victorian criticism in general, may be

said to begin in the brilliant little essay by Swinburne from which a passage is quoted above. Arnold echoed this praise in the preface to a similar anthology. The influence of Ruskin, especially in the third chapter of *Fiction, Fair and Foul* (1880), must be taken into account, as must so powerful and searching a study as Lord Morley's essay. This reaction received full expression in John Murray's edition of Byron's Poetry and Prose, completed under the editorship of Mr. Coleridge and Mr. Prothero some ten years ago. German research, especially that of Brandl, Koepfel, Kölbing, and Eimer, has contributed to this revival. The new Life by E. C. Mayne is the logical outcome of this renewed interest and appreciation.

From the purely biographical side the work is for the most part satisfactory. The author accepts without question the "fragment of truth" contained in Lord Lovelace's *Astarte*, and, largely in the light of those revelations, has undertaken a new history of his career and estimate of his character. Though it must be reluctantly admitted that the balance of probability favors *Astarte*, the attempt at a refutation of that book put forth by Mr. Richard Edgcumbe has been too contemptuously dismissed. *Byron, the last Phase*, however fantastic in the extremes to which it goes, serves to show the contradictions in the evidence offered by Lord Lovelace, and to illustrate how entirely at variance external and internal testimony may be. In a new German edition of Byron (*Byron's Werke. Herausgegeben von Friedrich Brie*, Leipzig, 1912), Mr. Edgcumbe's version is accepted and is used as light in obscure passages. Miss Mayne, on the other hand, has implicit confidence in Lord Lovelace, and cites as testimony the so-called "confession" written by Mrs. Leigh in 1816, a document which Lord Lovelace failed to publish and the suppression of which is a suspicious circumstance, since as evidence it would have been of more value than anything else. The other *crux* in the biography of Byron, the identity of Thyrsa, Miss Mayne ignores, save for an unimportant note. It is worth remarking that Mr. E. H. Coleridge, contradicting

his earlier and eminently sensible view of the subject (note to *Childe Harold* II, 9), has, in his latest article on Byron (*Encyclopædia Britannica*, eleventh edition, vol. IV, p. 898), revived the utterly untenable theory that the Thyrza poems refer to the death of the Cambridge choir-boy Eddlestone.

Miss Mayne depicts Byron's character with great fairness and some insight. He is neither the wronged angel of Moore and the Guiccioli, nor the incarnate fiend of anti-Byronism. In spite of her rebuke addressed to Mr. Francis Gribble, with the remark "I regard his love-affairs as things of little importance to any one but their victims. Worthily to write of Byron, indeed, is to write of all but them" (I, 297), there is a tendency to devote too much space to the love-episodes, notably to that with Caroline Lamb. The real greatness of the final phase in Greece is appreciated and adequately presented, but there should have been acknowledgment of the debt to Mr. Richard Edgcumbe's investigations into the last days of Byron's life.

On the critical side the work is wholly unsatisfactory, though the author may plead that she is writing biography, not criticism. Remarks like "Our ludicrous familiarity with the opening lines of *The Prisoner of Chillon* is fatal to serious consideration of the poem" are too frequent. Nor can the plea *De gustibus* account for some of the capricious estimates, such as the exaltation of *Marino Faliero* above *Sardanapalus*. Miss Mayne has apparently no conception of the value of Byron's dramas, not in themselves, but as an aid to the understanding of his entire achievement.

There are a few minute errors of fact that may be noted.

Vol. I, p. 145, text and note 2. Miss Mayne says that the prose explanation of the attack on Lord Carlisle "appeared in the first edition" of *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* and was "an unmistakable clue to the authorship." This "further allusion" did not appear in the first, anonymous edition (see page 50 of that issue), but was added with much else in the second edition. This error Miss Mayne owes to the neglect of Mr. E. H.

Coleridge to call attention to the date of the insertion of this note. That there was some attempt at anonymity, even if unsuccessful, is further shown by the original reading of line 726 of *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* (line 490 of the first edition), whereas Miss Mayne quotes the passage from later editions of the poem.

Vol. II, p. 73. Byron's "laconic" denial of indebtedness to Goethe's *Faust* in the composition of *Manfred* is quoted as his authoritative utterance on the subject. But elsewhere (*Letters and Journals*, V, 37), he admits such indebtedness, at least by implication.

Vol. II, p. 109, note 3. The recasting of the third act of *Manfred* is said to be "the only example of a second attempt in all Byron's work." But compare the first and second versions of the first act of *Werner*.

Vol. II, p. 110. Miss Mayne curiously identifies Nemesis and Astarte in the second act of *Manfred*.

Vol. II, p. 182, note. Mr. Coleridge's Bibliography (Poetry VII, 275), has no record of any copies of the first edition of *Marino Faliero* with a portrait of Margarita Cogni as frontispiece, nor does such a portrait appear in the copy owned by the present reviewer. The passage from his letters quoted by Miss Mayne makes it possible that Byron had seen such a copy, but it is much more likely that he had been misinformed, as was frequently the case, by one of his English correspondents. Otherwise this item in Byron-bibliography stands in need of some explanation.

There are a few misprints and incorrect references in the volumes, as follows:

I, 92, note 1, line 4;—I, 143, line 5;—II, 84, line 2 (a word has dropt out);—II, 92, line 7 (add "vol. I" to reference);—II, 127, line 14 from bottom (for "the" read "these");—II, 159, note 1 (an incorrect reference);—II, 170, note 2 (add "vol. V." to reference);—II, 210, note 2 (an incorrect reference).

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